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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009

Section 33, Safety and security, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In his report to the General Assembly on the progress achieved in establishing a strengthened and unified security management system for the United Nations both at Headquarters and in the field (A/61/531), the Secretary-General proposed the reclassification of the post of deputy to the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security from the D-2 level to the Assistant Secretary-General level.

2. Having considered the report of the Secretary-General, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions recommended that the reclassification be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (A/61/642, para. 5). In its resolution 61/263, the General Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee subject to the provisions of that resolution.

Background

3. The Secretary-General had proposed that the structure of the new Department of Safety and Security include an Assistant Secretary-General to be the deputy to the Under-Secretary-General (A/59/365/Add.1 and Corr.1). In its report on the proposals of the Secretary-General, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, while supporting the establishment of an Under-Secretary-General for the proposed department, reiterated that the Under-Secretary-General must be in direct operational charge of the new entity. It also stated that if, on the basis of experience, the head of the new security entity deemed it necessary to have a deputy at the Assistant Secretary-General level, the Secretary-General could then propose the creation of such a post in the context of the implementation report (A/59/539, para. 39).

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4. In paragraph 24, section XI, of its resolution 59/276, the General Assembly decided to establish a D-2 post of deputy to the Under-Secretary-General and to review the post in the context of the implementation report to be submitted by the Secretary-General at its sixtieth session. Owing to the need to obtain practical experience in working within the approved structure and pending the full recruitment of senior-level positions in the Department, no such proposal was made at the time the implementation report was submitted to the Assembly at its sixtieth session. However, with the benefit of experience gained over the past two years, it has become increasingly evident that there is a need for a deputy at the Assistant Secretary-General level. A department with operations comprising 1,830 staff worldwide and a biennial budget of approximately $400 million requires sound leadership and management, with responsibilities at the senior level fully covering the operational, administrative and representation areas. Consequently, a proposal was made by the Secretary-General (A/61/531) for the reclassification of the D-2 post to the Assistant Secretary-General level. Details in support of the proposal are contained in paragraphs 4 to 12 of the report. Based on discussion during the sixty-first session of the Assembly, further explanation is provided in the annex to the present note.

5. It will be recalled that if the D-2 post were upgraded to the Assistant Secretary-General level effective 1 January 2007, additional requirements for the biennium 2006-2007 would amount to $33,400 under section 33, Safety and security, and $6,800 under section 35, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment (see A/61/531, para. 12). Should the General Assembly approve the proposal of the Secretary-General, those requirements would be adjusted in accordance with current costing parameters and would be reflected in the initial appropriation for the biennium 2008-2009.

Conclusion

6. **In accordance with paragraph 28 of its resolution 61/263, the General Assembly may wish to revert to this matter when it considers the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009.**

Annex

Additional information on the proposed reclassification

1. Extensive travel is expected from the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security resulting in his/her absence from Headquarters while visiting critical areas around the globe for approximately two weeks per month, and the reasons for his/her direct involvement outside of Headquarters are manifold, including: (a) the anticipated growth in conflict zones and the deepening of conflicts resulting in the need to engage with Governments at the most senior levels; (b) the implementation of a unified security management process requiring his/her participation in inter-agency conferences, the High Level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, and the Inter-Agency Security Management Network; (c) consultations on security issues with the senior officials of the organizations participating in the security management system and with senior officials in areas of operations; and (d) meetings with host-country officials.

2. Because of the frequent absences of the Under-Secretary-General from Headquarters and given that security management at the United Nations requires a clear line of authority and accountability at the higher levels of management, it is the view of the Department that the deputy to the Under-Secretary-General should be at a level (Assistant Secretary-General) that would permit full accountability on all issues affecting the operations of the Department and the security of staff, as indicated in the accountability framework. Thus, either the Under-Secretary-General or the Assistant Secretary-General would be available to carry the full responsibility and accountability of any security decisions taken within the framework.

3. A deputy to the Under-Secretary-General at the Assistant Secretary-General level is critical for the smooth functioning of the Department and to fulfil the myriad of complex tasks and provide continuity in operational matters relating to all aspects of security, both at Headquarters and in field operations. In addition to expertise in the field of security, the Assistant Secretary-General would require in-depth knowledge of the functioning of the United Nations system.

4. The Deputy would share with the Under-Secretary-General the full range of responsibilities for the executive direction and administration of the Department of Safety and Security. He/she would advise the Under-Secretary-General in the planning, coordination, direction and management of the Department's programme of work and ensure cohesion of activities of a cross-cutting nature. The deputy would manage the day-to-day activities of the Department, with specific responsibility for directing and managing the Executive Office, the Policy, Planning and Coordination Unit, the Compliance, Evaluation and Monitoring Unit and the Field Support Service.

5. The deputy would deputize for the Under-Secretary-General in the latter's absence and undertake missions on his/her behalf. The deputy would represent the Under-Secretary-General at meetings of intergovernmental and inter-agency bodies, as well as at international conferences and other meetings on all issues related to safety and security. Furthermore, in view of the fragile cost-sharing arrangement that supports the provision of security in the field, the deputy would assume full responsibility for United Nations system-wide coordination of activities, including liaison with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes on all administrative

matters, including cost-sharing arrangements. To effectively carry out the above functions and to be able to manage from a position of parity with counterparts, it is critical that the post of deputy be established at the Assistant Secretary-General level.